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ABSTRACT

Published once each semester by Manhattan College (New York), the report serves as a resource for faculty and students as they deal with professional ethical dilemmas and conflicts in their course work and work lives; it also helps to further the Center for Frofessional Ethics' basic purpose of promoting greater sensitivity to the ethical dimensions of professional life within society. The lead article in this issue, "Bishops' Pastoral: A Challenge to the American Conscience," by Marion Hunt, reviews the U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on economics and notes the Center's intention to provide opportunities for extended comments and reflection on the bishops' message. One such opportunity, a workshop in response to the pastoral, is announced in another part of the newsletter. Also in this issue are a detailed follow-up article by John R. Wilcox on a case study of an ethical dilemma published in the newsletter's first issue; an account of a Center-hosted computer ethics workshop; and a discussion of the classroom climate with regard to continuing disparities between male and female students. (TRS)

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Manhattan College
Center For
Professional Ethics

Report

Manhattan College, Riverdale, N.Y.

Bishops' Pastoral:
A Challenge to the American Conscience

by Dr. Marion Hunt, S.C.

The U.S. Bishops' pastoral, "Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy," submitted in draft form to the Bishops at their November meeting, contains much to interest the ethical community. Based solidly on Scripture and the tradition of the Church, especially the social teachings of the modern Popes from Leo XIII to John Paul II, the document is radical only if one regards Catholic social teaching as radical. Early on, the Bishops make clear the principle which roots the entire Pastoral: "The dignity of the human person, realized in community with others, is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured."

Part One sets forth the biblical and ethical perspectives underlying the letter. Tracing the biblical version of human dignity and social solidarity through the three motifs of Creation, Covenant, and Community, then developing ethical norms for economic life, the authors create the context for Part Two. In that section the Bishops take the considerable risk of applying their scriptural insights and moral principles to five quite specific areas of modern life: employment, poverty, food, and agriculture (not completed in time for this draft), economic collaboration and international economic concerns.

The document demands extended reflection and comment, and the Center plans to provide opportunities for just such discussion. Here, we limit ourselves to two suggestions, corresponding roughly to the two main divisions of the letter.

The temptation to skip the more theoretical Part One should be firmly resisted. No approach could be more mistaken than to read the second part without first absorbing the theological and ethical principles from which the more practical judgments flow. Bishop Weakland, in introducing the document to the Bishops' Conference, calls the section entitled "Ethical Norms for Economic Life" (nos. 74-79 and especially 86-89) the heart of the document. Here the Bishops, noting the success of the 200-year-old American experiment in guaranteeing civil and political rights to all, maintain that economic rights such as adequate nutrition, housing and work are not similarly enshrined in our legal and cultural traditions. They urge "the formation of a new cultural consensus that all persons really do have rights in the economic sphere." The pro-

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Bishops' Pastoral (Cont'd)

tection of these rights is not an optional work of charity but a matter of justice which should be backed up by the "intellectual and institutional resources" of society. Social justice, as it has been understood in Catholic moral theology, demands that persons have the chance to be active, productive members of the community. When people are left out of the power structures, deprived of participation in the economic, cultural, and political life of society, they are relegated to the ranks of non-persons and are effectively exclused from the human community. Against such marginalization, the Bishops raise their voices. An economic system must not be judged on productivity alone, but by the way in which it meets the needs of people, especially the poor.

Although there is no doubt that Part Two depends heavily on Part One, in reading the second half of the letter, one should keep in mind the Bishops' distinction between moral principles binding on all and the concrete application of these principles where people of good will can honestly disagree. The Bishops in making their own applications proceed carefully - gathering current data, listening to experts and practitioners, applying the principles and making recommendations. Since their applications are so tightly connected with their principles, the concrete analyses are not to be taken lightly. The Bishops' interpretation in Part One of the meaning of work in human life, for example, leads inexorably to the conclusion in Part Two that reducing a 7.4 percent unemployment level must become a national priority. Given their stand on human dignity and social solidarity, their outrage in Part Two at the high percentage of Americans living under the poverty line and their insistence on society's responsibilities to alleviate poverty are completely logical. There is, however, room for disagreement on their specific recommendations for relieving poverty.

Reactions to this section have been varied. For some the Bishops are too concrete; they should have stayed with the principles. For others, they are not concrete enough; they fail to show in detail how their suggestions are to be implemented. John Haughey, S.J., at the Manhattan Symposium on the Pastoral suggested that the Bishops deliberately avoided including more specifics, in part because they did not wish to deflect attention from the core of the document -- the theological and moral principles. Perhaps this is one case where the medium is the message. Composing the letter in draft form, inviting responses from all quarters, reworking the document in light of the feedback -- this collaborative process itself models the economic collaboration envisioned by the Bishops. Through it, they invite their audience to repeat the authors' own experience of disciplined, shared reflection; they challenge readers to unleash their powers of creative imagination in the attempt to integrate principles of justice with the concrete workings of the economy. The Bishops are quite aware that their quest for justice seems, at times, to be on a collision course with the realities of the American economy. But they refuse to take a defeatist attitude. Inspired by their Biblical faith, impressed by the spectacular feats Americans have achieved when they believed against all odds that a goal was worthwhile and possible, they are trying to generate the hope that transforms vision into action. They appeal primarily to those actively engaged in the economy, but they also issue a special call to institutions of higher learning to increase teaching and research in the areas covered by the letter. The document will be a success even if thoughtful people disagree with some of its applications, provided these same people take up the challenge to provide even better ways of giving economic substance to the biblical and moral principles from which the whole document draws its power.

Course Notes: During the spring semester, the "Business Ethics" course (78-438) is offered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 10:10 A.M. in De La Salle Hall, Room 203. "Engineering Ethics" (78-437) is offered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 11:15 A.M. in Manhattan Hall, Room 109. Those interested in these courses are invited to attend any of the class lectures. The course syllabi are available from Dr. John Wilcox, Manhattan Hall, Room 434.

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Computer Ethics Addressed at Workshops

On February 5, 1985 the Center for Professional Ethics hosted a computer ethics workshop that brought together sixty Manhattan and Mount faculty along with a number of students and educators from other institutions. Deborah Johnson of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute discussed issues such as liability for program malfunctions, invasion of privacy, concentrations of power, and the ethics of copying programs. These issues did not represent new ethical dilemmas, but rather they have created a new context for the application of traditional ethical principles. Donn Parker of the Stanford Research Institute focused on case studies as a way of illustrating the issues Dr. Johnson raised and as a method of teaching computer ethics by means of case studies.

This workshop is the initial phase of a project which will assist faculty and students in understanding and becoming sensitive to the ethical issues arising in this technology which is profoundly affecting all aspects of society. In the fall of 1985 a new course offering entitled "Computers, Technology, and Ethics" will bring the issue into the curriculum. Problems such as the ambiguity of technology and the relationship between faith and science will be discussed. The impact of the computer and technology in general on work will be analyzed in terms of automation, deindustrialization, the rise of service and knowledge industries, alienation, unemployment, power, privacy, crime, the militarization of the budget and industry, as well as in terms of the global impact of hi-tech business. Business and engineering faculty along with computer professionals will participate in teaching the course.

In the spring of 1986 a six-week workshop will continue the consciousness raising initiated by the computer ethics workshop held this year. This program has been developed to assist business, engineering, and mathematics faculty members and other interested teachers at Manhattan College, the College of Mount St. Vincent and area schools, as well as professionals in the field. The workshop will consist of six sessions, each lasting two hours. Issues to be covered include an analysis of the ethics code governing computer professionals, the meaning of responsibility, the issues of privacy, power, ownership, and copyright. Each topic will be complemented by case study presentations. Special attention will be given to integrating these topics into computer-related courses and in-service education programs in the private sector. Further details will be provided in the fall issue of The Center for Professional Ethics Report.

As a result of these three projects, faculty, students, and professionals in the field will develop a clearer sense of the new context that computer ethics provides for understanding classical ethical problems.

The Classroom Climate

The bishops economic pastoral presents a powerful challenge to redress economic inequities in America, particularly those affecting minority groups. Despite the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, despite the enactment of Title IX in 1974, despite the increasing presence of women in the workforce, inequities still exist. A recent study by the Department of Labor has documented sex differences in salaries for entry level positions after differences in educational level, occupation, and geography have been eliminated. The study concluded that the median salary of full-time women workers was 60 percent of men's salaries.

Although the picture is improving for some college educated women, particularly for those entering traditionally masculine fields such as engineering, these women still remain in the minority. Most women enter traditionally feminine occupations that are characterized by poor pay and low status.

Recognizing that the path to intellectual development, personal growth and professional mobility has traditionally been through education, women are entering college, obtaining 49 percent of all baccalaureate degrees. Despite this encouraging trend, a recent report by Roberta Hall, the associate director of the Project on the Status and Education of Women, has indicated that women students are still treated differently from their male colleagues. The report, entitled "The Classroom Climate for Women," reviews the results of research conducted at a variety of co-educational institutions. The research results indicated that men's confidence, self-esteem, and career opportunities increase, while women's frequently decline. The complex, multifaceted nature of these disparities may be partially attributable to an educational climate that is more hospitable to men than to women students.

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Classroom Climate (Cont'd)

What are these differences in the educational environment? There are two types of differential treatment that many women experience--those behaviors that single women out and those that overlook women. Reflecting an overt sexist bias, behaviors that single women out are exemplified in disparaging comments about women's intellectual abilities, their scholarship, and their competence, or that question their academic or professional commitment. These behaviors create a hostile classroom environment, perpetuating and "validating" sexist attitudes and behaviors. Fortunately, these comments have declined as the number of women students has increased.

However, subtle differences still exist in the educational climate for women students, frequently stemming from unconscious, subtle belief systems that are imbedded in the way we interact with each other as men and women. These differences are reflected in expectations, verbal and non-verbal communication systems, and patterns of interaction, frequent-

ly generating inadvertent barriers. Such behaviors include:

> Inequities in the classroom that are carried over from social situations, such as interrupting women more frequently, or taking men's comments or criticisms more seriously.
>
> Conducting classroom discussions that inadvertently discourage women from participating, such as utilizing examples which reinforce stereotypes of masculine or feminine traits, behaviors or roles, and employing the generic "he" to represent both men and women.
>
> Behaviors outside of the classroom that reflect subtle differences in expectations such as providing informal feedback for men more frequently than women, or not including women in informal, after-class conversations.

What can we do as concerned educators to eliminate these subtle barriers, to create appropriate learning environments for all of our students? As faculty, we can examine and alter those behavior patterns or teaching techniques that create an uncomfortable climate for women. Faculty members can encourage women's participation inside and outside the classroom, provide support and advice for women entering traditionally masculine fields or considering graduate school, and alter those subtle behaviors that adversely affect women. As administrators, we can legitimize concern over the classroom climate by requesting feedback from staff, faculty, and students and encourage research on the topic. This issue is an important one since it adversely affects all of our students, our integrity as an academic community, and our commitment to equal opportunity.

On Tuesday, April 16, Ms. Hall will speak at Manhattan College on "Sexism on the College Campus." The talk will begin at 3:30 P.M. in the College's De La Salle Hall, Room 300.

Workshop Responds to First Draft of Pastoral

"Response to the Bishops Pastoral" will be the theme of a one-day workshop slated for Thursday, March 21, in the College's Smith Auditorium. A group of six speakers will address select topics relative to the first draft of pastoral, "Catholic School Teaching and the American Economy."

According to Dr. John Wilcox, director of the College's Center for Professional Ethics, "I see the day as an attempt to inform students, faculty, the Catholic laity, and other interested parties as to the purpose and content of the first draft, an opportunity to critique the draft with the purpose of assisting the bishops in their revisions."

Scheduled to begin at 9 a.m., the workshop will open with a keynote address to be delivered by Bishop Peter Rosazza of the Bishops' Committee on the Pastoral. This will be followed by presentations by Dr. Pheme Perkins, of Boston College, who will discuss "The Biblical Section of the Pastoral" and a talk by Dr. Thomas Shannon, of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, who will speak on "The Ethical Criteria in the Pastoral." Following a luncheon break "The Unfinished Agenda: Food and Agriculture" will be the topic of a talk to be given by Dr. John Hart, of the College of Great Falls. Professor Martin Poblete, of Columbia University, will then discuss "The United States and the World Economy" and Dr. Nancy Barrett, of American University, will speak on "Collaborating to Shape the Economy." The afternoon session will conclude with a "Response by the Bishops" to which area bishops will be invited to participate. A prayer service from 5 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. will conclude the workshop.

The event is being sponsored by the Center for Professional Ethics, Pax Romano and the Manhattan College/College of Mount St. Vincent Joint Council for Cultural Services.

For registration information contact Dr. Wilcox at 212-920-0414.

The Kate Simpson Case *Continued . . . . .*

by Dr. John Wilcox

After publication of the Kate Simpson Case in the first newsletter, several faculty members and students inquired about her decision. They wanted to know if any of the student answers were the correct solution. Some complained that there was not enough information in the case to make a decision. One engineering professor felt that bids involving money was completely inappropriate in consulting work. What response can be given to these questions and criticisms?

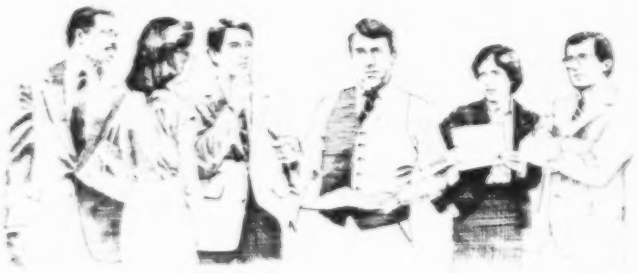
There is no doubt that the information given in this case is minimal. Next to nothing is known about Lawton Medical Financing, bidding procedures in the consulting field, or laws regulating these procedures in Georgia. Something is known about the office dynamics at the Atlanta branch of Lawton, but even that is spotty knowledge. It is understandable if one were to back off and say that no advice can be given with so few facts at hand.

The purpose of this case, however, is not to mimic trial proceedings or jury deliberations. The primary role of case studies is an educational one. It is rare to have all the facts in a particular case. Even then, facts are subject to interpretation, and if one were to wait until all the interpretations were in, case studies would have no place in the classroom. What, then, is this educational role? Cases provide examples of ethical dilemmas. Without them, students of business ethics or any other professional field are left in the abstract, though very important world of principles concerning utility, rights, and justice, without any method of applying these principles. The moral imagination of the reader is stimulated by case work. Though no definitive answer to the Simpson Case was offered, there is no doubt that the reader is more sensitive to the injustice in the case: insider information putting other bidders at a disadvantage.

The reader is also impelled to seek a solution, even though little information is present. But how should Kate decide? Is there a method available for making decisions in ethical dilemmas? Cases stimulate discussion among students, bringing to light hidden assumptions about the nature of ethics, the problem of objectivity and relativism in moral matters, as well as day-to-day issues of office politics and carcer advancement.

Furthermore, case studies advance two important goals in higher education: critical thinking and well-developed writing skills. Case presentations easily lead to intensive class discussions, allowing a role for everyone. This device enhances discussion among the students themselves and not simply between individual students and the instructor. Moving from normative criteria through evidence and finally to a moral judgment assists in the articulation of logical thought processes and builds on information learned earlier in the course. Personal response to and analysis of the case in a short essay carries forwards the goal of emphasizing writing across the curriculum.

A word of caution is, nevertheless, in order. There are volumes of well-documented case studies in all the professions. Students look forward to making class presentations on the Ford Pinto, Love Canal, or Infant Formula cases. They frequently come to conclusions different from the expected ones, especially when their sources of information are diverse. However, the danger involved here is that too great an emphayis on these publicized cases conveys the impression that professional ethics involves martyrdom or highly unusual situations. Because of this problem, there is a need for more "mundane" cases. Graduates are faced with an array of issues when they begin working. Five stand out as being significant for professionals:



1. Sexism. While there is an increased sensitivity to the issues women face in both public and private life, institutionalized male dominance still rules the workplace. This is an issue engineering and business graduates, along with other professionals, will confront immediately and almost universally. Cases which highlight discriminatory patterns of hiring will help sensitize students to this issue. Consciousness raising will be assisted by discussing situations in which male and female employees interact, how each sex perceives the other in the work environment, and the subtle forms taken by sexual harassment.

2. Office politics. Lines of authority may be clearly delineated on a flow chart and an open door policy might be clearly stated as an organizational goal. Who actually runs the office and how much can be said to whom are often different from the official policy. The stated objectives of an organization might be a very low priority compared to the acquisition of personal power and prestige by some employees. Students should have a clear sense of both the rational and political model of the organizations they will work for in the near future. Although discussion of the ethics of political tactics in the office or the workplace is appropriate to a course in management ethics, other professionals -- engineers, educators, lawyers, and doctors also deal with such issues as: blaming or attacking others, controlling information, image building at the expense of others, ingratiation.

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Simpson Case (Cont'd)

3. A day's work for a day's pay. A central moral obligation on the part of the employee is to be just toward the employer. This is an ongoing obligation, one that may be more difficult to observe than blowing the whistle. If one's co-workers do not put their time in, it can be almost impossible to act differently without risk of ostracism in the office. During course work for graduate school or using the corporation's computer time without paying for this personal use are also issues future employees should be sensitized to before they leave school.

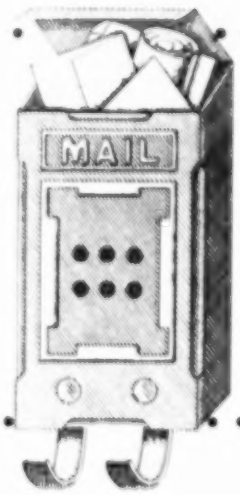
4. Protection in being ethical. The employer's obligation to the employee involves a clear responsibility to allow him or her to be ethical. Engineers, for instance, are especially vulnerable in this area. The engineering codes emphasize the primacy of responsibility for public welfare. Engineers, the vast majority of whom are employed and not independent consultants, are thus in tension with managers, marketing directors, and sales people, all of whom will give priority to profits. Generally engineers are not protected by unions, work at the will of the employer, and have only begun to receive support from their own professional societies when an ethical conflict arises. Such a conflict might involve a decision to refuse design work endangering lives, or a less dramatic issue, such as the refusal to copy a proprietary copyrighted program worth several hundred dollars.

5. Realizing the ethical dimension in one's work. Since policies and decisions reached by professionals in business, engineering, law, medicine, science, education, and other fields have profound effects on people's lives, it is imperative to see that these policies and decisions have an ethical dimension. A clear example of this comes from the field of engineering. Many of these professionals will be involved directly or indirectly in defense work. Furthermore, engineers often work as part of a team and may have little understanding of the overall aim of the research and design that they are doing. An electrical engineer might be designing components for a weapons system and not know the purpose of the assigned project. Of course, many engineers see themselves as having relatively few employment choices and find it difficult to divorce themselves from weapons work, even if they so wish. The most important point, then, is to insist that any decision regarding defense work is an ethical decision. Working for a defense contractor should not be seen simply as an "employment opportunity," but as a decision having profound moral implications. Engineers should realize that there are limits to the use of weapons in terms of their effects on the innocent and the proportionality between means used and ends achieved. In other words, only a well-developed moral position supporting involvement in or abstention from defense work will result in conscientious decision-making by professionals involved in arms development. Cases in other professions also highlight the ethical dimension of decisions. For instance medical procedures involve monetary costs. On what basis are decisions made for testing and surgery? What moral obligation do physicians and hospitals have for cost containment in patient care?

These issues have immediate relevance for the college student. He or she will soon be in the professional world. However, such ethical education is not limited to the course in professional ethics. Hopefully, this discussion will assist faculty teaching in the professional areas themselves as they seek the integration of professional and ethical competence in course work. Furthermore, the professional in practice should find this analysis of the case method of value for in-service training programs and workshops. The Center for Professional Ethics is committed to assisting faculty, students, graduates and other professionals who read this newsletter in using the case method in their own work, or more personally, to assist anyone who may be faced with an ethical dilemma--their own personal "case."

We'd like to hear from you . . . .

The Center for Professional Ethics welcomes your response to all articles appearing in this issue and would be pleased to provide any additional information on upcoming events upon request. Write to Manhattan College Center for Professional Ethics, Manhattan College, Room 414, Bronx, NY 10471.



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